



Cultivating Peer Conversations

Denise Sheehan
denise@emmaus.act.edu.au





Background

- Emmaus is a Pre-school to Year 10 School and a member of CEN (Christian Education National www.cen.edu.au). We are located in the established, leafy, northern suburb of Dickson ACT. Emmaus provides a high quality education and is committed to providing a balanced program of spiritual, emotional, physical and academic nurturing to all its students.
- Why did the school decide to engage in the LNCA?
- Emmaus initially participated in LNCA to improve on teacher and student performance in middle school numeracy.
- Numeracy was chosen as the focus as two years ago because our data indicated that we had good Reading, Spelling and Writing pedagogy delivering good results already but revealed some weakness in numeracy performance in our middle school students.
- Long term LNCA Goals across the 2 years and beyond:
- In 2015, the Coach's main focus was to gain knowledge and understanding of the practice of instructional coaching, learning about the best practices for teaching numeracy and sharing such best practices with predominantly 3 colleagues. Coaching activities included sharing resources, going into classrooms to model practices and suggest classroom management practices.

- By 2016, Emmaus' goal was to establish peer coaching as an on-going internal professional learning tool.
- In 2017, Emmaus intends to continue peer coaching with the same leaders, but provide more in depth modelling and exploration of coaching methods to our existing 6 coaches.

Jim Knight
www.instructionalcoaching.com

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
 PROJECT ZERO
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking>

Stage One of the coaching journey

In 2015, workshops provided by the LNCA allowed Emmaus to understand and see through video resources what instructional coaching is, how other schools have done it and the professional improvement tools that the coaching process can utilise to enable a teacher to identify a meaningful professional goal, benchmark the teacher's current performance, identify strategies for change, and then benchmark again to see if the goal has been achieved or what needs to be done should improvement was not as expected.

The Jim Knight Workshop was one key event that introduced us to the concept of instructional coaching as a valuable internal professional development resource that is sustainable for us in the long term. The video links from his website www.instructionalcoaching.com enabled the main coach to see how other coaches conduct their practices.

The Harvard Project Zero- Visible Thinking workshop is most valuable in that it highlights the effectiveness in enabling critical thinking when we explicitly think about what we see. This applies to building student learning as well as professional learning of teachers.

2016 Term 1, Week 2- Rollout

Key actions-

Peer Conversation Meetings were planned into our Professional Development Term Plans.

Teams were allocated

Coaches were introduced to the concept and practice of instructional coaching.

Self videoing was expected to be used.

Key data- Pre-data of the coaches were gathered

Key reflections The book Focus on teaching was also introduced to the leaders but there was not enough time to go into details.



In 2016, Emmaus decided to implement Peer Conversations as the structure for on-going internal professional development. The resources and tools for Instructional Coaching supported this strategy. As a result, Emmaus started peer coaching under the name of Peer Conversations selecting 6 coaches to lead teams of 3-4 each.

Peer Conversation meetings are planned into our Professional Development Term Plans.

Teams were allocated by our Director of Studies. I was a leader because of the LNCA training from 2015. One of my coaching partner from 2015 became a leader this year. Another leader attended a Jim Knight workshop later in 2016.

Pre-data on how the leaders felt they understood what instructional coaching is was documented in a survey.

Coaches were introduced briefly to the concept and practice of instructional coaches. The book Instructional Coaching by Jim Knight was distributed to the coaches. Specific chapters were highlighted for reading prior to the group meetings.

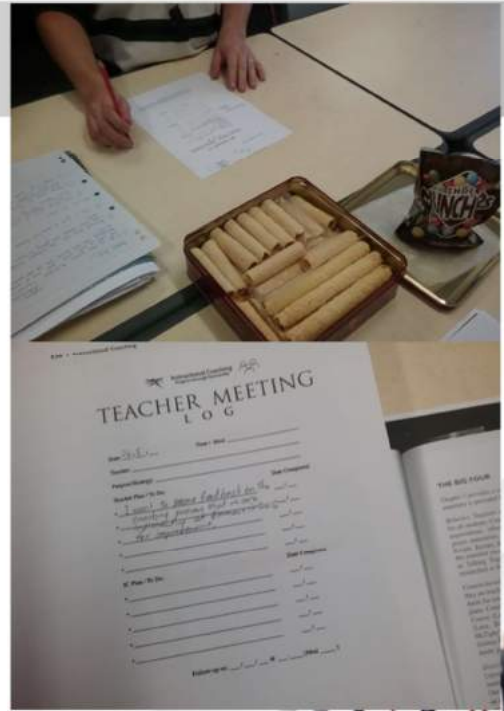
Using video was pre-established as the tool to identify areas of improvement and for measuring change. The book Focus On Teaching was also introduced to the leaders but there was not enough time to go into details.

2016
Term 1, week 8
Commence Coaching

Key actions
1st group Meeting
Identify goals

Key data
Establish individual goal using
The Big Four criteria

Key reflections
Videoing is a suitable tool for some
goals, but may not suit all goals.



2016
Term 1, week 8
Commence Peer Conversations

Key actions
1st group Meeting
Identify goals

Key data
Establish individual goal using 'The Big Four' as criteria.

Key reflections
Videoing is a suitable tool for some goals, but may not suit all goals.

2016
Term 2
Filming and evaluating

Key data collected

Teachers filmed themselves.

Key actions

Teams met

Identified areas to work on

Key reflections

Not enough time.

Limitations of the technology



Photo: <http://www.lessonbox.co.uk/recording-a-lesson-top-tips-for-teachers/>



Key data collected

Teachers filmed themselves.

Key actions

Teams met

Identified areas to work on

Key reflections

There was not enough time to watch and comment on everyone's 50 minute lessons in one meeting.

Limitations of the technology:-

Using a phone or ipad may not focus on the right part of the class action at times. If the equipment is too obvious, it affects the behaviour of the students so the teacher does not get a recording that is representative of a typical lesson. Sometimes the camera ends up capturing desk tops instead of the student's faces. One teacher lost her recording.

2016 Term 3 Implement changes and film again

Key data collected

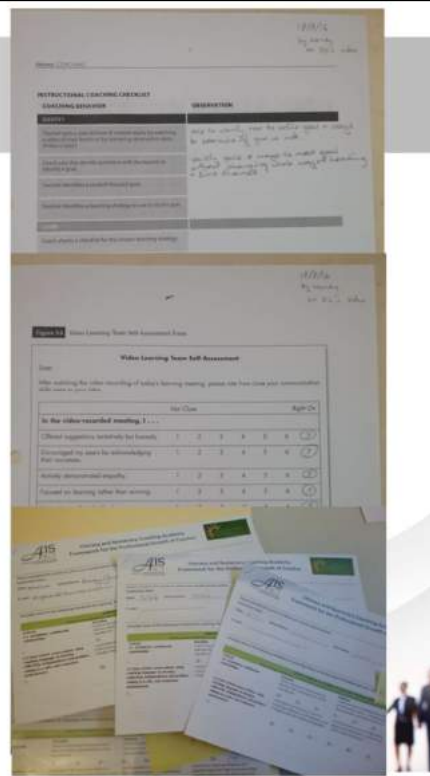
Teachers made changes in their practices.
They filmed themselves again.

Key actions

Teams met to see if the teaching practice has met the goals after strategies were implemented.
Coaches were surveyed again.

Key reflections

Not enough time.
Some in the team no longer work on the day staff meeting is on.
Tried to use empirical methods of measure but not all coaches are aware of the tools available.



Term 2

Key data collected

Teachers filmed themselves.

Key actions- Teams met to help each teacher identify areas to improvement for their chosen goals

Key reflections

Not enough time to watch everyone's video so we ended up seeing only 15minutes of each.

Term 3

Key data collected

Teachers make changes in their practices.
The teachers filmed themselves again.

Term 3

Key actions

Teams met to see if the teaching practice has met the goals after strategies were identified

Key reflections

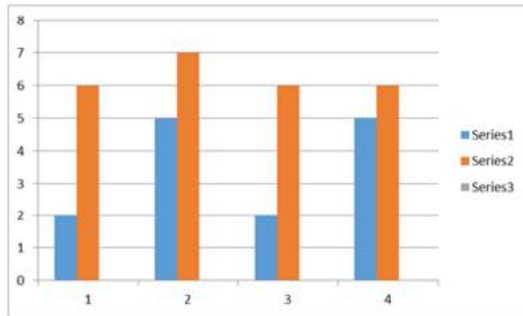
There was not enough time again.

Some in the team no longer work on the day staff meeting is on.

Tried to use empirical methods of measure but not all coaches are aware of the tools available.

Summative Findings

All 4 new coaches felt that they have improved in their ability to set goals and develop action plans.

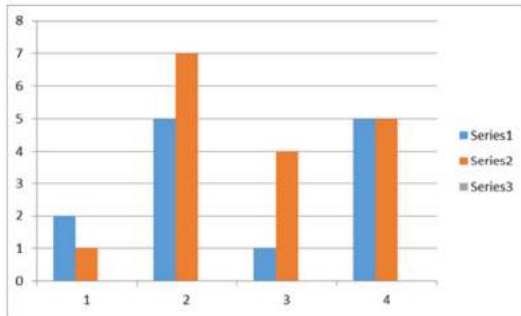


Q4.1 Works to develop professional goal setting of teachers and action plans

Key
■ Pre data
■ Post data



3/4 new coaches felt that they used data as the basis for change better by the end of Term 3.

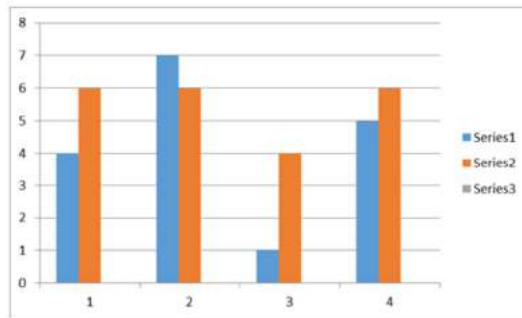


Key
■ Pre data
■ Post data

Q 4.2 Uses data as the basis for change in practice.



3/4 new coaches felt that they are using coaching language better.



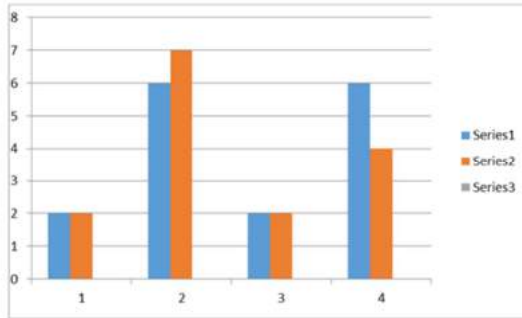
Key
■ Pre data
■ Post data

Q1.2 Uses critical conversations **using coaching language** to develop reflection, independence and problem solving in a safe, non-evaluative environment.



For future improvement of the coaches:

The ability to assist teachers in plan, implement and assess instruction for learning.



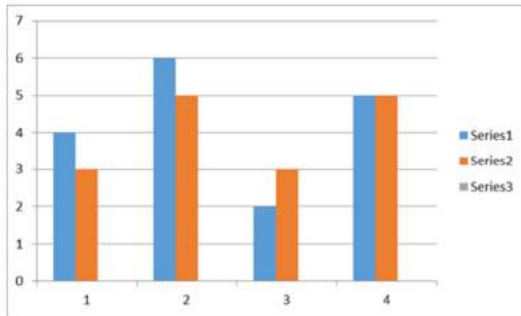
Key
■ Pre data
■ Post data

Q 5.1 Assists teachers in using best practice to plan, implement and assess instruction for learning.



For improvement of the coaches:

The ability to use different coaching approaches along the coaching continuum.



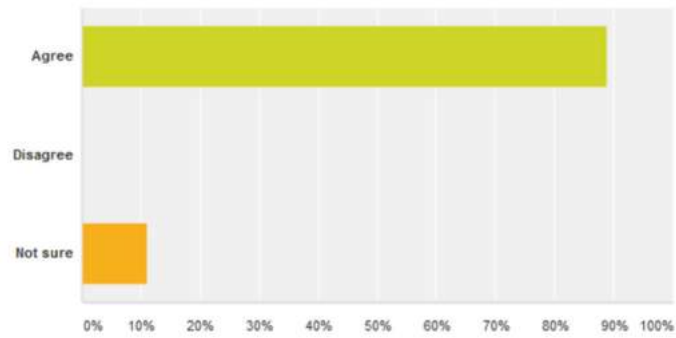
Key
■ Pre data
■ Post data

Q2.1 Plans and implements for ***different coaching approaches along the coaching continuum*** to meet the needs of teachers.

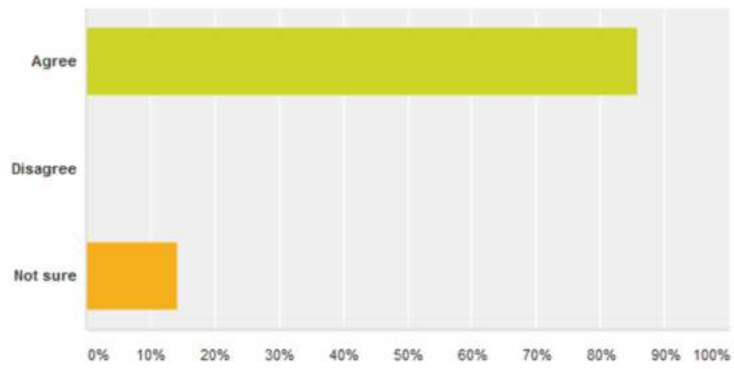


For our teachers:

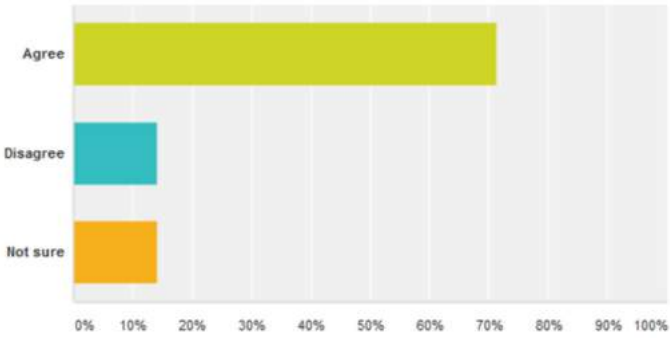
I was able to identify a professional goal
with the support of my peer conversation
members.



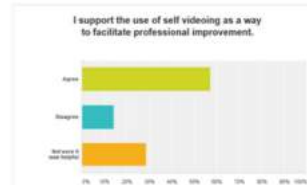
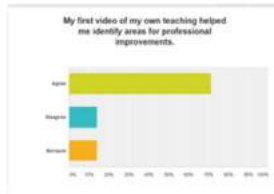
**I met one or more professional goals
through the support of my peer
conversation group.**



My peer conversation members were helpful in suggesting strategies for professional improvement.



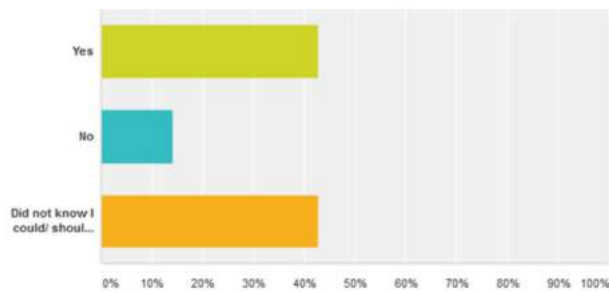
For future improvement, different methods of data mining for different purposes can be explored, modelled and coached.



For future improvement:

More coaching and modelling different ways to analyse and compare different kinds of data against best practices may be needed.

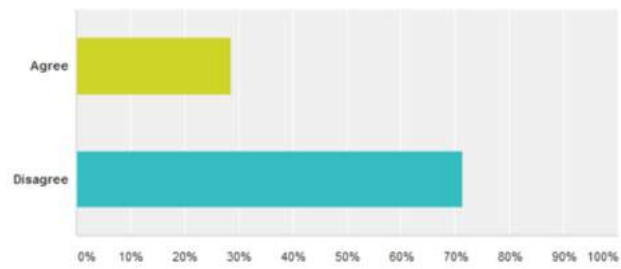
I had a table or other empirical ways to help me benchmark, tally and compare my teaching when I viewed my two videos.



More coaching and modelling different methods to mine data with the assistance of tables, tallies, timing and coaching on how to analyse and compare such data against best practices may be needed.

For future consideration, most teachers did not feel that they had enough time to discuss their goals and strategies.

I had enough time with my peer conversation group to discuss my professional goals and strategies to reach my goal.





Conclusion:

Peer Conversations was successful in helping our teachers identify their personal professional goals, somewhat helpful at identifying strategies for improvement at Emmaus in 2016. All teachers who provided feedback supported Peer Conversations as a mechanism for professional development. Self- videoing is one way to identify our needs. Different forms of data mining can be explored in the future. Different ways to analyse different forms of data against evidence based best practices should be explored. More time may need to be dedicated to the process if teachers are to make use of the data effectively.



Peer Conversations will continue in 2017 with the same coaches.

Coaches and teachers will explore in greater detail the different forms of data mining methods and analytical methods. We will also have another colleague join the LNCA-Writing in 2017 so we will have 4 leaders who would have an understanding of instructional coaching.

Useful Resources



www.instructionalcoaching.com

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking>



FORMAL WRITTEN TEXT: (please include) *This presentation reports on the findings from “The AISACT Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy (2015/2016)”, delivered in partnership with Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and funded by the Students First Support Fund.*